

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7213

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

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SUBJ: REPATRIATION OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES

REF: A. BANGKOK 13878

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SUMMARY: A RECENT FLURRY OF NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS CLAIM CONTINUES SUCCESS FOR THE THAI BUSINESS DELEGATION WHICH HAS SPEARHEADED RENEWED DISCUSSIONS WITH THE NORTH VIETNAMESE IN PARIS ABOUT THE REPATRIATION OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES FROM THAILAND TO NORTH VIET NAM. THE RTG DESIGNATED LUANG CHARTTRAKARN KOSOL, CHAIRMAN OF THE THAI RED CROSS, TO MEET WITH THE DELEGATION AND FOLLOW UP WITH THE NORTH VIETNAMESE IN PARIS. THE NORTH VIETNAMESE, HOWEVER, HAVE APPARENTLY ASKED INFORMALLY THAT A RANKING OFFICIAL FROM THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR GO TO PARIS. THE NORTH VIETNAMESE MAY WANT TO DISCUSS A RANGE OF SUBJECTS, BUT WE STILL SEE NO SIGN THAT THEY ARE READY TO ACCEPT THE REFUGEES. END SUMMARY.

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1. THE RECENT RETURN OF THE THAI BUSINESSMEN'S GROUP FROM

PARIS AFTER TALKS WITH NORTH VIETNAMESE OFFICIALS ABOUT THE REPATRIATION OF REFUGEES HAS TRIGGERED ANOTHER FLURRY OF NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS. THESE STORIES RELATE THAT THE DELEGATION WAS ENLARGED BY TWO MORE BUSINESSMEN, BOTH OF WHOM ARE BANKERS. THEY FURTHER DESCRIBE THE BUSINESSMEN AS SO CONFIDENT THEY ARE MAKING PROGRESS THAT THE GROUP WENT TO LONDON TO INSPECT A BOEING 707 WHICH IT EXPECTS TO LEASE IN THE ANTICIPATION OF BEING AWARDED THE CONTRACT TO TRANSPORT THE REFUGEES ONCE THE NEGOTIATIONS ARE SUCCESSFUL. THE PRESS ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT WHEN THE DELEGATION RETURNS TO PARIS THIS MONTH, RANKING MINISTRY OF INTERIOR (MOI) OFFICIALS WILL REPORTEDLY SUPPLEMENT IT (REF B).

2. RESPONDING TO THE RETURN OF THE BUSINESSMEN'S DELEGATION, THE RTG DESIGNATED RETIRED POLICE DIRECTOR GENERAL LUANG CHARTTRAKARN KOSOL, PRESENTLY CHAIRMAN OF THE THAI RED CROSS, TO TALK TO THE DELEGATION OCTOBER 3. AN MOI OFFICIAL WHO ALSO PARTICIPATED IN THE MEETING WITH THE BUSINESSMEN INDICATED TO US THAT ALTHOUGH THE RTG IS SKEPTICAL OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE PROPOSAL, IT DID WARRANT CONSIDERATION.

3. A RANKING OFFICIAL IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MFA), IN REVIEWING THE SITUATION WITH US, CONCLUDED THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE APPARENTLY PREFER THE PRESENT FACADE OF "UNOFFICIAL" DISCUSSIONS ON REPATRIATION. HE INDICATED THAT THE TERMS THAT THE DELEGATION BROUGHT BACK WERE ENCOURAGING ENOUGH THAT LUANG CHART WAS TO HAVE RETURNED TO PARIS WITH THE DELEGATION ON OCTOBER 5. THE MEETING OF OCTOBER 3, HOWEVER, DISCLOSED THAT LUANG CHART, AS HEAD OF THE THAI RED CROSS, WAS NOT AN ACCEPTABLE ENVOY TO THE NORTH VIETNAMESE. THE DRV INDICATED TO THE DELEGATION THAT THEY WANTED A RANKING MOI OFFICIAL TO COME TO PARIS. THE MFA OFFICIAL INTIMATED THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE WISHED TO DISCUSS MORE THAN JUST REFUGEE REPATRIATION.

4. DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER PRAPHAT CHARUSATHIEN REPORTEDLY TOLD NEWSPAPER MEN OCTOBER 4 THAT THE RTG WOULD SEND AN OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVE TO PARIS "IF NORTH VIETNAM

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SENDS AN OFFICIAL LETTER TO INVITE THAILAND IN A PROPER AN HONORABLE MANNER."

5. CONCLUSION: THERE MAY BE SOME FIRE IN ALL OF THIS SMOKE. THE RTG HAS ENCOURAGED THE GROUP OF BUSINESSMEN TO CONTACT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT ONCE THE FRAMEWORK HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED, THE NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE TURNED OVER TO MOI. WE HAVE NO INKLING

THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE ARE CURRENTLY INTERESTED IN
REFUGEE REPATRIATION, EXCEPT THAT THE DRV HAS APPARENTLY
ACCEPTED THE RTG SPONSORED INITIATIVE. BY INSERTING LUANG
CHART, HOWEVER, THE RTG MAY BE INDICATING THAT IT IS NOT READY
TO PROCEED WITH SPEED. WE CONTINUE TO DOUBT THAT THESE NEGO-
TIATIONS WILL BEAR FRUIT IN THE NEAR FUTURE.
MASTERS

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